



South Downs Society

Protecting the Beauty of the Downs

Development Control Manager
Brighton & Hove City Council
Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove
BN3 3BQ

23rd February 2016

Our Ref: DO8/TB/BHCC/8/35

Dear Sir

Your Ref: BH2015/04184

Location: Court Farm House King George VI Avenue Hove

Description: Full Planning - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 1no three storey block with basement parking and 3no part three part four storey blocks containing 74no one, two and three bedroom flats (C3) including 30no affordable housing units.

Thank you for providing an opportunity for the Society to comment on the above application.

Court Farm is located in the north east corner of an area known as Toad's Hole Valley which was designated part of the Sussex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) back in the 1960's and retained that status even after the A27 bypass was built, but was excluded from the National Park when it came into being in April 2010. It remains outside the urban boundaries and forms part of the open and sweeping downland on the edge of the City adjacent to the National Park. Toad's Hole Valley, which encompasses Court Farm, has been subsequently included in the emerging City Plan and is presently designated as a development area (DA7).

Back in 2012 an application was received for 5 houses and a 58 bed nursing home on land in a highly prominent location on the edge of the South Downs. The Society responded stating that granting permission for development would be premature and that any proposed development on this site must be considered in the wider context of the Toad's Hole Valley area as a whole and not in isolation.

Your Authority concurred with this position and, with other reasons, refused permission. However, the application was allowed on appeal. In allowing the appeal the Inspector confirmed that commercial or residential uses would be acceptable on the site and could be developed independently from the rest of the Toads Hole Valley area. Therefore, the principle for development on this site has been established.

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Our concerns for the previous application (BH2012/03446) also included the visual impact on the setting of the National Park. Under Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 the council has a duty to have regard to the impact of its decisions on the neighbouring national park. These concerns remain in respect of this current application. In particular, a number of the visual representations show the development extending above the tree line and visible from the Park. The Society has previously indicated that both the design and density of any development on the Toad's Hole Valley site would be crucial if it is to avoid damaging the views in and out of the Park. We would not like to see a precedent being set if this application was to be granted planning permission in its present form. Therefore, we ask that your Council revert to the applicant and consider with them further options on design to enable a reduction in height of the development prior to any decision.

Yours faithfully

Steve Ankers
Policy Officer